United Nations E/2010/SR.32

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

27 August 2010

Original: English

Substantive session of 2010

Operational activities segment

Provisional summary record of the 32nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 July 2010, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Soborun (Vice President) ..... (Mauritius)

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10-44735 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 5.15 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(d) Long-term programme support for Haiti (E/2010/CRP.5)

Introduction

1. **Mr. McNee** (Canada) introduced the report on the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2010/CRP.5), following the Group's visit to Haiti from 16 to 19 June 2010. He cited earlier meetings on Haiti after the devastating earthquake in mid-January 2010, in particular the International Donors' Conference Towards a New Future for Haiti, held in New York on 31 March 2010, and the Summit for the Future of Haiti, held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 2 June 2010, as well as the preparatory meetings in Santo Domingo and Fort-de-France and the ministerial conference held in Montreal in January 2010. The purpose of the Group's visit had been to review how the economic and social situation had evolved on the ground and how international assistance to the country was enabling a transition from recovery to reconstruction. The Group had been honoured during its visit to meet President René Préval and Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, as well as other cabinet ministers.

2. The country's transition through the phases of relief, recovery and reconstruction was not a clear linear path. The magnitude and concentration of the devastation had been unprecedented, and the number of people affected was enormous. Widespread and continued humanitarian assistance was still needed, while recovery was slow and the reconstruction phase was only in its planning stage. There were 1.6 million internally displaced persons in 1,342 camps, which raised concerns as to the sustainability of the livelihoods of the affected populations, particularly as the hurricane season approached. The difficult situation called for increased leadership and coordination on the part of the United Nations to support the Government of Haiti in all those stages. The United Nations enjoyed close working relations with the Government and the humanitarian and development communities at large and had a central role to play in advocating for recovery efforts and in mobilizing all international actors. United Nations leadership in support of the Government's efforts would greatly contribute to accelerating progress and avoiding the stagnation of efforts that would be detrimental to the stability and long-term development of the country.

3. During its visit, it had been made clear to the Group that the forthcoming elections were a source of concern. For many, the electoral climate was critical to sustainable recovery and the reconstruction process in the year to come. Political ambitions and aspirations would become ever more acute in an environment in which important new sources of international funding were made available. The Group therefore called for a high degree of responsibility from all actors in order to lead the electoral process to a positive end and to avoid any disruption to recovery and reconstruction.

4. The Haitian Interim Reconstruction Commission had begun meeting, which demonstrated a common willingness by many stakeholders to move forward in a coordinated and transparent way. The Group hoped that the Commission would not only focus on the approval of projects but would also provide a forum for strategic thinking on the reconstruction process. The Commission should support national development priorities, whether funded by the Haitian Reconstruction Fund or by other bilateral or multilateral channels. The Fund had also begun meeting, but there had unfortunately been very few contributions announced for the Fund so far. It was important that the complexity of those mechanisms should not slow down the delivery of assistance to the reconstruction of the country nor jeopardize the principles for aid effectiveness established at donors' meetings. The Group recommended that the Haitian authorities and their development partners should make every effort to ensure an efficient functioning of the Commission and the Fund, with maximum guarantees that funding would be used for concrete outcomes.

5. All actors, including non-governmental organizations, should work in coordination within the framework of the Government Action Plan for Recovery and Development of Haiti and take advantage of the aid-tracking portal developed by the Haitian Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which would ensure transparency in development support and promote the strengthening of national institutions.

6. The Haitian State apparatus and its personnel had been very seriously affected by the earthquake. The staff of various Ministries were currently sharing the little remaining office space in order to ensuring continuity of services. International aid needed to be sensitive so as not to marginalize national structures. Haiti was at a crossroads: significant funds had been pledged for reconstruction and the conditions for the development of a State apparatus that would be real, organized and long-term were now in place and the opportunity must not be missed. The ministries should also be closely involved in the action of the Interim Reconstruction Commission and submit projects to the Fund, which would increase the ownership by the Haitian people of their own development.

7. The Commission and the Fund could also set a certain percentage of projects and funding that Haitian authorities would be directly responsible for. The systematic and long-standing reliance on non-governmental organizations to implement projects should gradually be replaced by efforts to strengthen Haiti's capacity, without which development could not be sustainable. The Group was aware of the difficulties in decentralizing public structures and services that had been virtually non-existent. Beyond the devolution of administrative services, the construction of infrastructure was a prerequisite for economic dynamism, like the creation of new institutions of higher education and medical facilities. The internally displaced persons who had left Port-au-Prince after the earthquake had begun to return, putting an additional burden on the battered capital. Specific efforts should focus on decentralization as a priority in development policies, and international organizations should strengthen their presence in the provinces so as to help local actors. There also remained an imbalance between the scarcity of domestic resources for disaster preparedness and the significant volume of international relief resources coming in.

8. The Group had seen close cooperation between international organizations active in the humanitarian system groups, each supported by a partner in the United Nations system or the International Organization for Migration. The Group also noted the need to increase the collaboration between those different groups. In the transition from recovery to reconstruction the Group advocated for the predominant role of the United Nations. The Group also urged all countries that had pledged to allocate funds for rebuilding Haiti to make their contributions immediately and in a sustained manner.

General debate

9. **Mr. Voltaire** (Haiti) expressed his Government's gratitude to the Economic and Social Council and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti for their valuable solidarity and work to support his country in its time of need. The report of the Group had usefully reviewed the many difficulties his country faced, including some dating from before the devastating earthquake of January 2010. His Government supported the proposal to renew the Group's mandate, as the Group provided valuable and authoritative recommendations on long-term development strategies for the country's recovery and stability.

10. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that his delegation wished to stress the need for Haiti's Government and people to maintain ownership over the development process. The success of the long-term reconstruction strategy would ultimately be determined by the national capacity to provide stable services. A state of lasting security would also be a measure of the improvement in the quality of life.

11. Political stability, including democratic elections, was critical to creating the political legitimacy needed for reconstruction. The efficient management of international aid, avoiding redundancy in existing mechanisms, was also a key component.. The Haitian Government's Action Plan for National Recovery and Development and the establishment of the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission, co-chaired by Prime Minister Bellerive and former United States President Bill Clinton, were both important steps in that direction. He also affirmed that the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti would continue to enhance the Council's contributions to the international community's support for Haiti.

12. **Ms. Dunlop** (Brazil) said that, six months after the earthquake, the situation on the ground remained daunting in Haiti. The donors' conference held the previous March had been a promising sign of the international commitment to reconstruction. Brazil had promptly disbursed the contribution it had pledged at the conference and called for other pledges to be fulfilled.

13. Her delegation supported Prime Minister Bellerive's vision of a stable country with stronger,

decentralized institutions and believed that the United Nations should play a significant role in reconstruction. That included coordinating international assistance and shaping the transition from short-term humanitarian assistance to long-term development.

14. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti played a unique role in supporting stability and the rule of law. It also faced unique challenges demanding increased political, human and material resources. The Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti had provided a place for advocacy and dialogue on the work of the United Nations in the country, and had the potential to keep Haiti on the international agenda. She called for a renewal of the Group's mandate that would reflect the new circumstances brought about by the earthquake.

15. The Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission and the Haiti Reconstruction Fund would help international donors deliver on their promises, with the Commission in particular ensuring coordination of funds. Aid initiatives should have three basic objectives: quickly improve social conditions through projects that could be implemented speedily; promote stability through reforming the justice and security sectors; and reinforce the foundations of long-term development by strengthening public administration and building human capital.

16. She called on all actors in Haiti to promote political stability in the country, including through the general elections scheduled for November 2010. Collective efforts should be guided by coordination, coherence and long-term engagement, as well as adherence to the Government's Action Plan for National Recovery and Development.

17. **Mr. Gutiérrez** (Peru) said that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, of which Peru was a member, included advising on development strategies, guaranteeing the coherence and sustainability of international aid for poverty reduction, and preventing redundancy among support mechanisms. The primary challenge to the Group, in the transition from recovery to reconstruction, was fulfilling that mandate with the urgency required.

18. The Group's recent visit to Haiti had provided it with a more realistic picture of the situation on the ground. He stressed the need for all assistance efforts, including those of the United Nations, Governments and civil society, to be in line with the national priorities set out in the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Haitian Government was critical in that sense.

19. The conference of donors in March 2010 had emphasized the importance of utilizing funds in line with the principles of national ownership. Given the large number of non-governmental organizations working in Haiti, he suggested the possibility of asking the countries of origin of those organizations to manage that cooperation and collaborate with the Haitian Government to ensure that non-governmental organizations' activities adhered to the national reconstruction plan.

20. His delegation recognized the Haitian Government's efforts to establish political stability and achieve economic recovery. International cooperation must support such efforts by promoting national capacity-building, including incentives for maintaining capacity in the long term.

21. The magnitude of the damage caused by the earthquake called for stronger security measures and a housing policy that mitigated the population's vulnerability in the face of the enormous shortage in housing. The tireless work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti had been important to maintaining peace and implementing the reconstruction process and building the Government's institutional capacity.

22. The work of the Advisory Group would remain critical to communicating the evolving situation in Haiti to the Council, and Peru remained fully committed to participating in those efforts.

23. **Mr. Lazarte** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that support for economic policies and reconstruction programmes that were able to create jobs in an environment of respect for decent work standards must be central to the reconstruction efforts and to shaping a new development model for Haiti. ILO therefore called on the donor community to allocate sufficient resources to provide the needed technical assistance to build new institutional and operational mechanisms, placing workers' rights, social protection and the creation of decent work at the top of the international agenda. Even before the earthquake the labour market had been extremely weak in Haiti, with nearly 55 per cent of the workforce unemployed. The majority of workers had been extremely poor and

many had been employed in unskilled or hazardous occupations. Informal employment had dominated and more than 80 per cent of the active workforce in industry and commerce had been engaged in the informal economy.

24. The earthquake had had a dramatic impact on physical assets and people's lives, particularly affecting employment, incomes and livelihoods. The disaster had disrupted the labour market, weakened training systems and facilities, generated an increase in unsustainable informal sector activities and worsened working conditions and workers' rights. Vulnerable groups had been particularly affected. Before the disaster, more than 1.8 million people had been receiving food assistance and over 40 per cent had been chronically malnourished and hungry, and after the earthquake the situation had considerably worsened. The majority of structures responsible for vulnerable groups had been incapable of reacting. Human, material and financial resources were lacking in the sector of social affairs. The victims of the earthquake often missed the deadlines for applications for aid. The impact of the earthquake, coupled with the dramatic environmental and socio-economic conditions prevailing before the disaster and the foreseeable impact of the recurring climate-related events in Haiti, had hindered the capacity of the most vulnerable groups to recover in the short term and rebuild their livelihood or to have access to social protection benefits, thus condemning them to a long-term dependency on humanitarian aid. Poverty, vulnerability and weak institutional capacity for recovery aggravated social tensions.

25. Haitian workers needed long-term sustainable employment that could enable them to shape their futures and rebuild their lives. Public investment was needed to create jobs and develop social services and quality education at all levels. That implied a multi-pronged and comprehensive approach: creating emergency jobs and sources of income; optimizing the impact of the reconstruction for sustainable job creation; facilitating the generation of lasting jobs in the private sector, focusing on small and medium-sized businesses in the informal sector; introducing new technologies and creating green jobs; operating on the basis of active employment policies, with particular attention to creating employment for youth; caring for vulnerable people and progressively establishing a basic social protection floor; promoting social dialogue throughout reconstruction; ensuring the respect for fundamental principles and rights and for international standards of work, beginning with the reconstruction process; and developing the capacity of the social partners.

26. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, ILO had invested significant resources in order to be active in Haiti, starting with the early humanitarian phase. It had collaborated with the Government, the social partners, the United Nations system and the international community, and had mobilized in order to analyse the impact of the disaster on the livelihoods of Haitian people. Job creation did not just happen as part of reconstruction and economic growth stemming from initial recovery efforts. Instead, it had to be set as a clear and ever present target that was part of short-term recovery efforts leading to longer-term development.

27. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) said that he had visited Haiti in February 2010 and again in June as a member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The situation in that country had grown more complex and it was important to take the situation on the ground into account in planning and delivering assistance that was appropriate to the needs of the country. He urged the international community to engage Haitians living in the diaspora in developing long-term solutions to the country's problems.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.